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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the different workplace cultures and accompanying professional values and behavior of university and public school partnership colleagues. It discusses the problems and successes of public school/university collaboration as documented in the research literature and relates those problems and successes to differences in workplace cultures. It shows how workplace cultural differences manifested themselves in a conflict regarding a course taught at the Winthrop University School of Education in which the middle school partners who enrolled were disappointed at being cast in a traditional learner's role when they perceived themselves as uniquely qualified by middle school experience. University faculty then realized that offering a traditional university course to professional development school colleagues was antithetical to shared decision-making. The foundation for effective professional development schools is an establishment of common cultural understandings and a willingness to work together. The partnership must value inquiry as a priority and allocate time and resources for this activity to occur. The paper speculates about the implications of these cultural differences for school-university partnerships that seek to create the professional development school as a "school of tomorrow." (Contains 20 references.) (JDD)

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School and University Collaboration:

Bridging the Cultural and Value Gaps

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> The Professional Development School is not a laboratory school. What is needed is not just a working coalition of schools and universities as they are, but a powerful synthesis of knowledge to help us find out what the schools of tomorrow might be like. To make this happen, universities will have to take schools seriously and treat them with respect, and they will have to take a close look at their own behavior and values.
>
> The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Schools*

This paper is about taking a "close look at [our] own behavior and values" in our role as university brokers of public school-university partnerships at two middle schools (The Holmes Group, 1990, p. 60). At Winthrop University, we call our professional development schools "partner schools" and refer to our collaborative role as that of school-university partnership "brokers." We are engaged in self-analysis because we desire to understand how our values and behavior as university brokers are molded by the culture in which we work and, moreover, why they may and do conflict with certain values and behaviors of our professional development school colleagues. What stimulated our present inquiry is a conflict that emerged when we began to teach a course at the beginning of the Fall semester of 1994 in which colleagues from two of Winthrop's six professional development schools enrolled as course participants. Once we reflected upon the nature of this conflict, we realized that our different "workplace cultures" contribute to the formation of different professional values and behaviors (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990; 1992) and that these differences must be acknowledged and resolved to both parties' satisfaction if effective collaboration is to occur.

In this paper we describe the different workplace cultures and accompanying professional values and behavior of ourselves as university partners and of our public school partnership colleagues. We discuss the problems and successes of public school/university collaboration as documented in the research literature and relate those problems and successes to discussions of differences in workplace cultures. We then show how the workplace cultural differences manifested themselves in a conflict regarding a course that we taught in which our public school partners enrolled. Finally, we speculate about the implications of these differences for school-university partnerships that seek to create the professional development school as a "school of tomorrow" (The Holmes Group, 1990). We propose an answer to the question: what shared values and beliefs of a new workplace culture might be necessary in order for school-university collaboration to create the new paradigm of schooling, that "hybrid" model called the professional development school?

Collaboration Shock--Conflicting Norms of the Workplace Culture

School-university collaboration involves representatives from the two institutions "laboring together" or "co-laboring" with "parity" so that neither party possesses a status that leads to an inequitable distribution of power (Feldman, 1992). True collaborative efforts between schools and universities require mutual planning and goal setting in which members of each institution share ownership of the goals and subsequent attempts to achieve them (e.g., Brookhart & Loadman, 1990; 1992).

University colleagues often identify lists of conditions well documented in the literature as necessary for the establishment of effective collaborative relationships. Wu (1986), for example, cites these prescriptions for mutually satisfactory collaborative relations: clarification of role expectations; establishment of communicative networks; establishment of supportive administrative structures; and development of trust between collaborators from each institution. Teitel (1991) notes that members from schools and universities in partnership must first establish interpersonal relationships before trust can develop. Denton and Metcalf (1993) recommend that, in addition to formal organizational patterns, these additional personal qualities of collaborative participants are needed: willingness to take risks; commitment to the joint enterprise; tolerance for ambiguity; high degree of energy; and compassion.

Despite the proliferation of recommendations for successful collaboration, problems in collaborative relations are equally well documented (Feldman, 1992; Parish, Underwood, & Eubanks, 1986-87; Soder & Andrews, 1984; Tatel & Guthrie, 1983; Teitel, 1991). First of all, although collaborative participants might desire to heed the sound advice contained in the research literature, the recommendations for successful collaboration are difficult to implement smoothly. Soder and Andrews (1984), for example, describe a case study of school-university collaboration; buried deep within their text is a small paragraph which acknowledges that major difficulties existed in the establishment of trusting relationships, communication among parties, clarification of role functions, and delineation of organizational jurisdiction. Moreover, tensions often arise in the actual process of collaboration, and "turf" issues,

such as those involved in the selection of personnel, must be resolved during the course of the collaboration itself (Teitel, 1991). In fact, collaboration might be more accurately described as a process in which participants from different institutions continually negotiate the power relations necessary to goal setting and implementation.

Second, smooth collaboration may be difficult because the underlying cultural assumptions of schools and universities are so fundamentally different that the institutions are often described as characterized by two distinct "workplace" or "organizational" cultures (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990; 1992; Parish et al., 1986-87). Workplace cultures include differences in essential aspects such as work tempo, work focus, rewards for work, and the degree of power and autonomy (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990; 1992). Universities traditionally value research, academic freedom and integrity, and high academic standards and ideals (Tatel & Guthrie, 1983). In contrast, schools are oriented toward the practical and may even possess an anti-scholastic culture (Smith, 1994). Tatel and Guthrie (1983) acknowledge the potential for major conflicts in values and expectations and offer mediation by an advisory board of neutral parties as a possible solution.

In the literature on case studies of school-university collaboration, one university representative actually proposes that true collaboration may not be possible in all circumstances in which schools and universities attempt to work together. Describing a collaborative research project between Stanford University and public school faculty, Feldman asserts that school-university collaborative relationships are inherently

"problematic" because of workplace "differences in goals, settings, and social status" (1992, p. 5). Feldman argues that equitable collaboration is not possible because goals differ significantly and then proposes "collaboration through separation" according to the different goals of school and university partners. Indeed, Feldman's idea of "collaboration through separation" acknowledges the school-university cultural differences as essentially incompatible. With that startling point in place, we turn now to the actual experience that prompted us to write this paper.

Using Our Experience as a Catalyst for Change

As part of a study funded by the Carnegie Foundation and the South Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and School Leadership, we organized a three-hour graduate course for our professional development school colleagues. Planning for the course was accomplished over several weeks during the summer before the 1994 Fall semester. The product of that planning was a traditional graduate course featuring readings, lecture, and presentations by experts in areas of related interest. Participants in the course were given a syllabus detailing course requirements including among other expectations two examinations, two formal papers, and a final written project. In most respects the proposed course conformed to the university's expectation of academic integrity in graduate classes and the long-held values of empirical inquiry and product-based evaluation. Unfortunately, we were to discover that these values were considerably less compatible with the needs and expectations of our professional development school colleagues.

The collision of university and professional development school values was both intense and instantaneous. Our colleagues made clear their surprise and disappointment at being cast in a traditional learner's role when they perceived themselves as uniquely qualified by experience in most matters related to middle schools. They wanted confirmation that their knowledge and experience counted. They sought assurance that their expertise was valued by the brokers and would be prized as a central element of course content. Moreover, they objected to the notion that the products of their study would be formally evaluated by the brokers, although concurring that some level of additional inquiry and resultant learning was appropriate. These conflicting values, needs, and expectations served as catalysts to our search for a compromise arrangement, one capable of meeting the principal interests of both groups.

Our search for a compromise solution was made more difficult by previous collaborative efforts with our professional development school colleagues. During the previous year university brokers and professional development school faculty had spent many hours developing a format for special internship experiences unique to middle level teacher preparation. We think this enterprise was truly collaborative in that the school-university colleagues shared a common agenda and participated with equal status in contributing ideas to the jointly conceived product. We see now in hindsight that offering a traditional university course as university brokers to professional development school colleagues was a serious mistake. Our role in the course was antithetical to shared decision-making. It put us back in a teacher-student relationship in which we found ourselves in the hierarchical power position of designing and delivering a

course which involved judging participants' work and awarding grades. The power and status differential undermined our previous efforts to establish a mood of trust and parity. Participants recognized this and objected to the new tone. One school colleague commented, for example: "In this course you are professors, not brokers. This isn't a partnership activity." We agree. In fact, we believe it is difficult if not impossible to maintain a collegial environment when one partner must evaluate the other (Million, 1990).

Now we are asking ourselves: how we can recreate the tone of parity and the mood of a shared agenda in our future work with our partnership colleagues? As we move to re-establish trust and to expand our future collaborative efforts, what are the implications as we work to create a professional development school that might be an innovative vision of the "school of tomorrow"? We must ask ourselves, first of all, what is this "professional development school" entity that we are trying to create, and, second, what shared understandings must precede its creation?

Creating a Common Culture in a Professional Development School

A "professional development" school (The Holmes Group, 1990) or "professional practice" school (Levine, 1992) is a means to achieve "the simultaneous reform of teacher education and schooling" through "exemplary 'practice' or 'teaching' schools which link colleges of education and schools" (Harris & Harris, 1992, p. 572). The creation of a professional development school requires an "organic" collaboration in which schools and universities share ownership of ideas, issues, goals, functions, and

solutions (Dixon & Ishler, 1992). Through their experience with the establishment of professional development schools in South Carolina, Dixon and Ishler note that organic collaboration is "complex" and "built with much time and effort" (1992, p. 28).

The problems inherent in creating effective professional development schools or organizing joint studies like our graduate course should not deter our efforts in these areas. We believe that it is possible to do these things but that doing so requires an understanding of the differences in university and school cultures and a commitment to address these differences in a search for common cultural ground. Brookhart and Loadman (1989) identify the tempo of work, professional focus, career reward structure, and a sense of personal power and efficacy as the predominate areas of university-school cultural differences. We believe that joint study and discussion of these potential differences can lead to consensus. Such discussions also may build greater trust and enhance each group's view of the other. Building trust, planning bilaterally, and establishing consensus-based goals are equally essential to successful collaboration.

Establishing common cultural understandings and a willingness to work together are more than ideals to which each party pledges allegiance. These elements are truly the foundation upon which effective professional development schools and other joint projects must be constructed.

The university-school partners in professional development schools bring dissimilar expertise to the enterprise, yet each partner's aptitude is

fundamental to success in collaboration. The logic driving professional development schools argues for organic collaboration not merely cooperative or symbiotic relationships (Schechty & Whitford, 1988). That is, success is most likely in a collaboration in which university and school personnel join together as equal partners. By identifying common values early in the process, both university and public school participants use knowledge and experience to reason toward a set of working values. These values, once identified and agreed to by all, should serve as the philosophical basis on which collaborative projects are designed, administered, and evaluated.

In building an effective professional development relationship there is no guarantee that communality sufficient to successful collaboration will be discoverable in every combination of proposed participants. The selection of personnel is critical to the success of collaboration. Neither the university professor who insists on controlling all aspects of collaborative research nor the classroom teacher who disdains the theoretical orientation of the university will likely contribute positively to collaboration. Those most likely to work well in this shared culture are those who have studied the basic cultural differences of the two groups, who value the theoretical and practical expertise of their collaborators, and who are prepared to modify their personal agendas for the benefit of the collaborative effort. Beyond these characteristics, those most likely to prosper in a collaborative environment are compassionate, energetic, and tolerant of ambiguity (Denton & Metcalf, 1993).

Creating the PDS as a "Hybrid" Center of Inquiry

Collaboratively building the working relationship necessary to the creation of a professional development school (PDS) will require, at base, the exploration of answers to the following questions. What values and goals do school and university participants hold? Which of these are shared values and goals? What changes might be required in our respective roles and values? How can school and university participants facilitate the mutual decision-making required in true collaborative efforts? Do we have the common mission and set of shared beliefs necessary for the partnership to create a professional development school?

In the concluding remarks to this paper we would like to speculate about an answer to the last question listed above because it seems to be the most fundamental to the PDS enterprise. In the case of Winthrop's school-university middle level partnerships, we think that, ostensibly, on the surface we do have a shared mission in the context of developing an exemplary teacher preparation program for teachers of middle level students. We think that both school and university partners would agree upon this aspect of the shared mission. We are not certain, though, to what extent each of us involved in collaborative activity at Winthrop University has thought deeply about the underlying conception of the fundamental mission of a "partner", or "professional development," or "practice" school as initially conceived (e.g., by Goodlad, 1990; The Holmes Group, 1990; Levine, 1992).

The Holmes Group (1990) challenges professionals to "invent a new organization" as a "center for reflection and inquiry." In bold, provocative language, The Holmes Group envisions a community of diverse constituents "living productively with uncertainty," "working at the edge of knowledge," and taking risks at the "limits of competence." In more mundane language, standards of the national accrediting groups such as NCATE proclaim the teacher as "decision-maker" and "problem-solver." To be consistent with the expectations of both groups, we must specify the professional development school as a center of continual and developing inquiry into the role and function of the teacher as a professional. Like Dewey's (1902) notion of the school, the professional development school must be committed not only to social and democratic ends, but to scientific ones as well. All PDS constituents--teachers, university professors, interns, and other preservice students--must be participants in a seamless continuum of professional inquiry.

The professional development school will be a hybrid, one that mixes the best of both school and university and exceeds the limits of each. Creating the professional development school as a center of inquiry is a formidable challenge. We note two immediate obstacles to be surmounted. First, as Tom (1985) has observed, there is no consistent theoretical model for framing the nature of inquiry in teacher education. This implies that inquiry into the "nature of inquiry" within a PDS itself seems a likely part of the actual creation of the PDS.

A second problem discovered in the course of our work relates to the work "tempo" aspect of school and university workplace cultures

(Brookhart & Loadman, 1992). On the basis of our experience in working with our professional development school colleagues, we believe that teachers have the following workplace-related values. Teachers want their practical experience to be respected by university faculty as a legitimate form of knowledge. Teachers want their status within the collaborative to be equal to that of their university partners. Teachers want, correlatively, to share power through the provision of an equal voice in decision-making related to partnership matters. We believe also that teachers value inquiry. From what we have observed in our work with professional development school colleagues, though, it appears that teachers have very little time in which to read, reflect, and engage in other behaviors related to thoughtful inquiry. In fact, the exceedingly rapid pace of teachers' work is documented in the literature as a phenomenon of "workplace tempo" (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992). A related implication might be that, in contrast, university faculty have more time available to devote to reflection and inquiry due to a less hectic workplace. We find, though, as faculty at a comprehensive university that the time we have to devote to reflection and inquiry is limited due to the demands of teaching responsibilities, scholarly expectations, and service commitments. To create a professional development school culture of reflection and inquiry, the school-university partnership will have to value inquiry as a priority and allocate time and resources for this activity to occur.

Bridging the cultural and value gaps to achieve organic school-university collaboration will require a deliberate search for a common cultural ground and compatible personalities. School-university collaborative participants might begin by discussing their different

workplace orientations and accompanying workplace values. Then, participants must work to identify the shared values and common goals essential to true collaborative partnerships. Finally, participants must answer the fundamental question: how do we envision the professional development school as a center of inquiry?

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